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TRENDS IN COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA
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1 OF 1

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TRENDS

in Communist Propaganda

S U P P L E M E N T

ON THE MIDDLE EAST:

MOSCOW COMMENTARY DISPARAGES IDEA OF WEST BANK STATE

NEW TIMES ASSESSES JORDAN, CENSURES PALESTINIAN "EXTREMISTS"

NEW TIMES ACKNOWLEDGES EXISTENCE OF COMMUNIST GUERRILLA GROUP

Confidential

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CONFIDENTIAL

15 OCTOBER 1970

- 1 -

THE MIDDLE EAST

MOSCOW COMMENTARY DISPARAGES IDEA OF WEST BANK STATE

Moscow has recently broadcast one of its rare commentaries touching on the idea of a Palestinian state. This commentary, by Yeliseyev in the domestic service on 11 October, follows the usual pattern of past references in treating the idea as an Israeli concept and therefore inherently suspect. In the first known acknowledgment of the notion in Soviet media following the June 1967 war, a PRAVDA article by Primakov in December of that year cited a remark by an Israeli cabinet minister as registering Tel Aviv's "intention to create a puppet 'Arab' buffer state on the occupied territories."

The Yeliseyev commentary now takes note of "reports from Tel Aviv" that the Israeli Government has been considering alternative "measures" for consolidating the Arab territories, especially the idea of creating "some kind of state" on the West Bank of the Jordan River. Supporters of this plan, Yeliseyev says, believe that the granting of self-government to the West Bank would automatically preclude the return of the region to Jordan. The plan's proponents also believe it "should end the idea of a partisan movement of the Palestinian Arabs" because they would have a self-governed territory, he adds. The commentary concludes, without elaboration, that Israeli "expansionism" and annexationist aspirations are "clearly perceptible" behind the plan, which is simply another variation of "numerous projects for territorial acquisition" nurtured by Israel.

While Moscow has usually ascribed the idea of a separate state to Israel and suggested that the motive would be to create an ostensibly Arab state that would in fact be subject to Israeli control, a SOVIET RUSSIA article in April 1969 mentioned without comment a favorable assessment by Lebanese politician Junblatt of the possibility of a state "within the historical borders of Palestine" encompassing both Jews and Arabs. Later in the same month, SOVIET RUSSIA quoted Fatah members on their aim of destroying the Israeli state and creating a new Palestinian state; on this occasion, the paper observed that the Palestinian aims of liquidating the state of Israel and "creating a 'democratic

CONFIDENTIAL

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FBIS TRENDS SUPPLEMENT
15 OCTOBER 1970

- 2 -

Palestinian state' do not appear practicable." It is doubtful, the paper added, whether it is now possible to turn the clock back and create a united Palestinian people of Jews and Arabs.

Moscow's only known profession of approval for the idea of a Palestinian Arab state came in a broadcast of the purportedly unofficial Radio Peace and Progress in Yiddish to Israel in August 1969. The broadcast asserted that people from all walks of life in Israel now understood that only real peace with the Arabs, including solution of the refugee problem, could bring security for Israel. It added that "an Arab state in Palestine would be a real step toward a political solution of the Middle East problem" and that the creation of such an Arab state could bring lasting peace and security to Israel. Supporters of such an idea, the broadcast said, had pointed out that as a result of the June 1967 war "Palestine had been restored to its 1947 frontiers and therefore the creation of an Arab state in Palestine would not necessarily cause difficulties now."

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FBIS TRENDS SUPPLEMENT
15 OCTOBER 1970

- 3 -

NEW TIMES ASSESSES JORDAN, CENSURES PALESTINIAN "EXTREMISTS"

NEW TIMES writers Volskiy and Usvatov take the recent "internecine war" in Jordan--the danger of which, they say, was long predicted by "progressives"--as a peg to present a review of the history of the country. The article--in issue No. 39, Russian edition 25 September--presents an essentially even-handed account of the tensions between the Palestinian refugees and the Jordan Government. Observing that half of the population of Jordan came from the former British-mandated territory of Palestine, the authors note that the number of Palestine refugees increased still more after the June 1967 war and Israel's occupation of the West Bank.

While the authors note, as Moscow propaganda has done in the past, that Israel has tried to hold Jordan responsible for the activities of the fedayeen, they are notably forthright in pointing to the Palestinians' "complete freedom of action" in Jordan and the government's difficulty in exercising control. They observe that tensions were worsened after the government's decision to support the three-month cease-fire and the resumption of the Jarring mission--when the "majority" of the Palestinian organizations "came out against the Egyptian initiative and against a political settlement in the Middle East altogether."

The authors then remark on the "social and political heterogeneity" and "organizational disunity" of the Palestinian movement itself. Through the proxy of the French Communist Party organ L'HUMANITE, they level Moscow's most outspoken criticism of George Habbash, head of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Criticizing "certain forces" for trying to impose "extremist slogans" and corresponding "adventurist tactics" on the Palestinian movement, they point specifically to the hijacking of civilian aircraft by the PFLP and the holding of the passengers as hostages. They quote L'HUMANITE as saying that "inadmissible statements" like the one made by Habbash, "who talks lightheartedly about the possibility of a third world war," play the same role "as the utterances of ash-Shuqayri" did in June 1967. Former Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) chairman ash-Shuqayri had been assailed by Moscow in a Mandarin-language broadcast in January 1968 as an "extremist among extremists" who had been warmly received in Peking and whose attempts to apply Mao's "singular policy and dogmatic formula" to the Arab East had harmed the PLO.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FBIS TRENDS SUPPLEMENT
15 OCTOBER 1970

- 4 -

The authors cite another French paper, LA NATION, for the view that extremists from both the government and fedayeen camps have become the real masters of the situation. They note not only Jordan's complex internal situation, but also its "important geographical position" bordering on "such politically dissimilar" countries as Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, as well as Israel, and with Iraqi and Saudi forces stationed on its territory. And they observe that according to a "leading Palestinian figure"--not identified--the Palestinian organizations operating in Jordan reflect the political contrasts in the Arab world.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FBIS TRENDS SUPPLEMENT
15 OCTOBER 1970

- 5 -

NEW TIMES ACKNOWLEDGES EXISTENCE OF COMMUNIST GUERRILLA GROUP

The 25 September issue of NEW TIMES contains the first known Soviet propaganda acknowledgment of the existence of the communist guerrilla organization Quwwat al-Ansar ("Partisan Forces") reportedly sponsored by the Jordanian, Iraqi, Syrian, and Lebanese CP's. "At the request of our readers," NEW TIMES provides "background notes" on Jordan and the Palestinian resistance movement, taking brief note under the latter heading of the origins of the Palestinian refugee problem and describing the main Palestinian organizations. It mentions that a coordinating body of the resistance movement, the Central Committee, was set up last June. It adds, without further explanation, that this committee "was recently joined by the Quwwat al-Ansar guerrilla organization which was set up at the beginning of the year."

The Beirut communist daily AN-NIDA had published on 7 March the text of a statement distributed in Jordan by "the Jordanian communists" announcing the formation of the guerrilla organization. The Lebanese communist weekly AL-AKHBAR a week later, welcoming the al-Ansar, said its formation was received with "great satisfaction" by Arab progressive and nationalist forces and "especially" by the Palestine resistance. AL-AKHBAR observed that al-Ansar was fighting with weapons while "continuing to resort to various means of political struggle"--a position espoused neither by the militant Syrians and Iraqis nor by the fedayeen. Later in March the Iraqi paper ATH-THAWRAH, while welcoming the organization "announced by certain Arab CP's," commented that it might "even become an obstacle" to fedayeen action and observed wryly that it would be illogical for the Arab communist parties to go into battle "against an entity which they regard as legal."

NEW TIMES' brief description obscures how "recently" al-Ansar was admitted to the Central Committee. While the group had asked to be included in various fedayeen umbrella organizations, Arab sources in the spring and early summer had indicated that this request was rejected, apparently chiefly on grounds of the pro-Soviet sponsoring parties' acceptance of the idea of a political settlement in the Middle East. Thus in a 5 June statement in AN-NIDA, al-Ansar said its forces welcomed the formation of the

CONFIDENTIAL

FBIS TRENDS SUPPLEMENT
15 OCTOBER 1970

- 6 -

resistance organizations' Unified Command, "although they have not yet joined it." Al-Ansar complained that it saw no benefit in postponing or delaying participation in the overall resistance establishments, "especially when the majority of the organizations approve of this." Two days later the Beirut AL-AKHBAR, in an article on the just-concluded session of the Palestine National Council in Cairo, also complained that the attitude of "certain resistance organizations" toward al-Ansar constituted a "big gap" in national unity, especially in view of the "class, social, and international significance" of the participation of al-Ansar--an organization "formed at the initiative of four Arab communist parties."

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